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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed for eleven-to-fifteen year old students who are in, or who have just completed, a French immersion program. It addresses two concerns of students and their parents: (1) how well students are achieving in French, in English, in other subjects, and in their overall intellectual development; and (2) what possibilities exist for these students to keep up their French once they finish an immersion program. With these issues in view, the booklet covers the following topics: (1) the history of French immersion programs in Canada; (2) early reactions to immersion programs; (3) a summary of the immersion experiment and its evaluation; (4) results of the French immersion studies, including views of immersions students in various parts of Canada; and (5) what students can do after immersion classes to get secondary immersion programs or continuing programs, and to maintain their French fluency in non-academic ways. The text is interspersed with pen-and-ink drawings and cartoon-like illustrations. Each section has several questions for discussion. (AMH)

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French Immersion: The Trial Balloon That Flew

Sharon Lapkin
Merrill Swain
Valerie Argue

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SERIES

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Contents

Preface/v

How It All Began/1

The First Reactions/5

The Experiment/7

- The Questions Asked/7
- The Types of Immersion Program Studied/8
- How the Experiment Was Carried Out/9

The Results/10

- Your English/10
- Your French/11
- Your Other Subjects/13
- Your Head!/14

It Isn't Over Yet/17

What You Can Do/19

- Take a Follow-up French Immersion Program/19
- Read French-language Books, Newspapers and Magazines/21
- Use French-language Radio and Television/22
- Go to French Movies and Plays/23
- Look for Bilingual Exchanges, Summer Jobs and Other Opportunities to Travel/23
- Talk!/24

A True Canadian/26

Preface

The Trial Balloon that Flew is designed for eleven- to fifteen-year-old students (grades 6 to 9) who are in, or who have just completed, a French immersion program. The booklet tries to answer two questions of major concern to these students:

> **(1) How well am I really doing, in French, in English, in my other subjects — in my overall intellectual development?**
>
> **and**
>
> **(2) What can I do to keep up my French once I graduate from an immersion program?**

In examining the first question, *The Trial Balloon that Flew* relies to a large extent on a recently published report, "Bilingual Education in Ontario: A Decade of Research," by Merrill Swain and Sharon Lapkin (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1981). Despite the Ontario focus reflected in its title, this report also includes information about the evaluation of immersion programs in other Canadian provinces. To supplement such research, the authors of *The Trial Balloon that Flew* have used interview and questionnaire responses from immersion students, or parents of immersion students, across the country.

In dealing with the second question, how to keep up one's French after graduating from an immersion program, the authors are indebted to Canadian Parents for French for providing many useful suggestions and for making their resources — lists of French reading materials, possible exchange programs, follow-up courses offered by various school boards, and so on — available to us and to our readers. Since much of this information can vary from one year or even one month to the next, we have attempted to point out the general avenues students can follow, referring them to appropriate agencies, or to Canadian Parents for French for more up-to-the-minute details.

We are also grateful to John Lasruk for his delightful illustrations, to Jill Kamin and Ruth Sims for their invaluable help in preparing the manuscript, to John McConnell for editorial assistance, and to Gwen Egan for design.

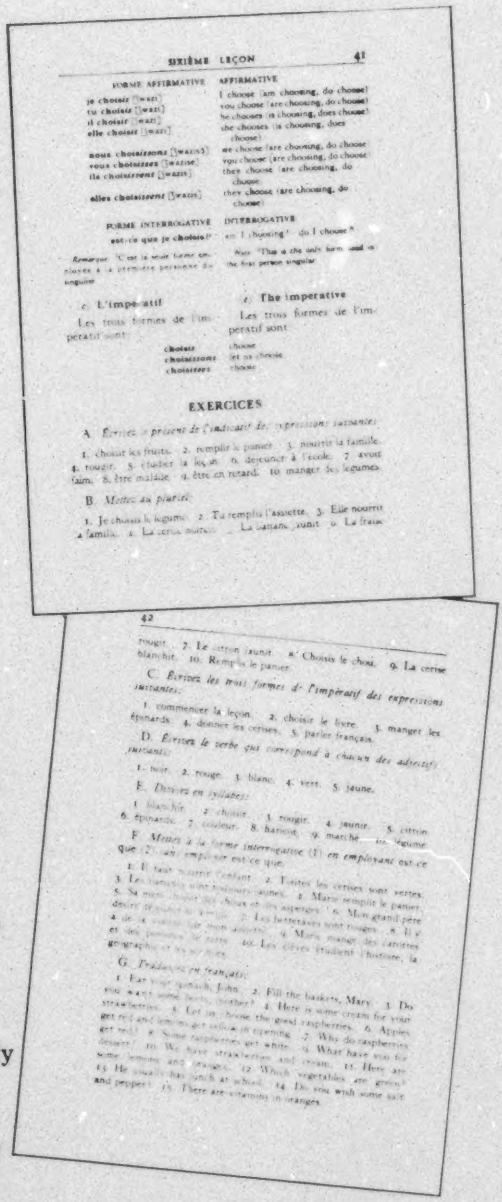
The expression "blessed with bilingual brains," used for the cartoon on page 15, is credited to the Bilingual Education Students' Organization of the University of Texas at San Antonio. The comments by parents of Montreal-area high school graduates, on page 18, are taken from interviews included in *The Social and Psychological Context of Language*, by Gary A. Cziko, Wallace E. Lambert, Nelly Sidoti, and G. Richard Tucker (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1980).

The Trial Balloon that Flew differs from other handbooks in the Language and Literacy Series in that it is intended for students, rather than parents and educators. Like the other handbooks in the series, however, its purpose is to inform its readers about issues in the development of language and literacy.

How It All Began

As recently as 1970, French immersion education was only really just getting under way in Canada. By 1982, more than 75 000 English-speaking students in elementary and junior high schools across Canada were involved.

If you had studied French in Canada before the late 1950s, the chances are you would have spent several hours a week working from a book such as the one on the right. You would have memorized long lists of vocabulary, verb tenses and other grammatical items, and for homework you would have been given English passages to translate into French. By the time you graduated from high school, you would have known the basic rules of the language. You would have been able to read and perhaps write fairly well in French. But it is unlikely you would have been able to carry on a normal conversation with a French-speaking person! Your teacher probably would



SIXIÈME LEÇON 41

FORME AFFIRMATIVE	AFFIRMATIVE
je choisir [wazi]	I choose (am choosing, do choose)
tu choisis [wazi]	you choose (are choosing, do choose)
il choisit [wazi]	he chooses (is choosing, does choose)
elle choisit [wazi]	she chooses (is choosing, does choose)
nous choisissons [wazisɔ̃]	we choose (are choosing, do choose)
vous choisissez [wazise]	you choose (are choosing, do choose)
ils choisissent [waziz]	they choose (are choosing, do choose)
elles choisissent [waziz]	they choose (are choosing, do choose)
FORME INTERROGATIVE	INTERROGATIVE
est-ce que je choisis?	am I choosing? do I choose?

Remarque. C'est la seule forme employée à la première personne du singulier.

Note. This is the only form used in the first person singular.

c. L'impératif

Les trois formes de l'impératif sont:

c. The imperative

Les trois formes de l'impératif sont

choisir	choose
choisissons	let us choose
choisissez	choose

EXERCICES

A. *Ecrivez au présent de l'indicatif les expressions suivantes:*

1. choisir les fruits. 2. remplir le panier. 3. nourrir la famille. 4. rougir. 5. choisir la leçon. 6. descendre à l'école. 7. avoir faim. 8. être malade. 9. être en retard. 10. manger les légumes.

B. *Mettez au pluriel:*

1. Je choisis le légume. 2. Tu remplis l'assiette. 3. Elle nourrit la famille. 4. La cerise mûrit. 5. La banane jaunit. 6. La fraise

42

rougit. 7. Le citron jaunit. 8. Choisis le choix. 9. La cerise blanchit. 10. Remplis le panier.

C. *Ecrivez les trois formes de l'impératif des expressions suivantes:*

1. commencer la leçon. 2. choisir le livre. 3. manger les épinards. 4. donner les cerises. 5. parler français.

D. *Ecrivez le verbe qui correspond à chacun des adjectifs suivants:*

1. noir. 2. rouge. 3. blanc. 4. vert. 5. jaune.

E. *Divisez en syllabes:*

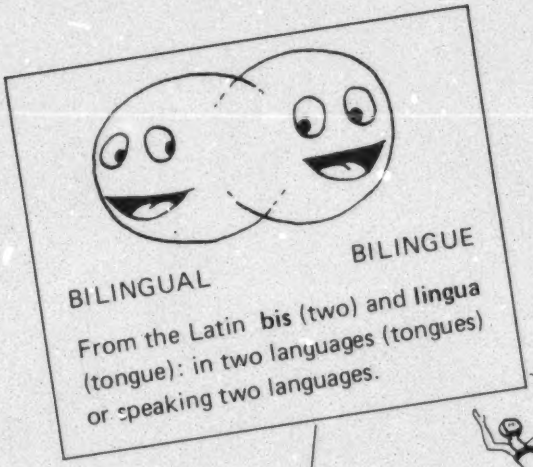
1. blanchir. 2. choisir. 3. rougir. 4. jaunir. 5. citron. 6. épinards. 7. couleur. 8. haricot. 9. marché. 10. légume.

F. *Mettez à la forme interrogative (1) en employant est-ce que, (2) sans employer est-ce que.*

1. Il faut nourrir l'enfant. 2. Toutes les cerises sont vertes. 3. Le [illegible] aime beaucoup [illegible]. 4. Marie remplit le panier. 5. Sa mère choisit les choux et les asperges. 6. Mon grand-père désire [illegible]. 7. Les betteraves sont rouges. 8. Il y a de la [illegible] sur mon assiette. 9. Mon père mange des carottes et des [illegible]. 10. Les élèves étudient l'histoire, la géographie et les [illegible].

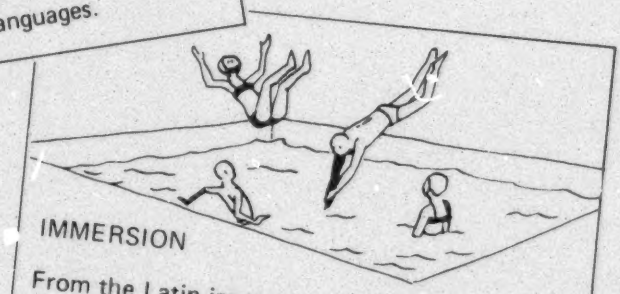
G. *Traduisez en français:*

1. Eat your spinach, John. 2. Fill the baskets, Mary. 3. Do you want some beans, brother? 4. Here is some cream for your strawberries. 5. Let us choose the finest raspberries. 6. Apples get red and lemons get yellow in autumn. 7. Why do raspberries get red? 8. Some raspberries get white. 9. What have you for dessert? 10. We have strawberries and cream. 11. Here are some lemons and oranges. 12. Which vegetables are green? 13. He usually has lunch at school. 14. Do you wish some salt and pepper? 15. There are vitamins in oranges.



BILINGUAL BILINGUE

From the Latin **bis** (two) and **lingua** (tongue): in two lanyuages (tongues) or speaking two languages.



IMMERSION

From the Latin **immergere**: to plunge or dip into (or as if into) a liquid, or to involve deeply.

have taught you largely in English, and apart from written exercises and the memory work you recited in class, you might never have had to use any French at all. Indeed, it is quite possible that had you gone on to university, you might have continued to pass your French courses without ever actually speaking the language!

"My daughter is in grade 8 in a French immersion program, and has clearly learned more French in a year and a half than I did throughout university."

Brenda Harris, University of Toronto graduate, class of '61

Gradually, ideas about learning a second language started to change. The emphasis in regular French classes shifted more towards listening and speaking, and a new approach to teaching French, called *immersion*, began to be explored.

Photo by Canapress

The man in this photograph, Wilder Penfield, was a well-known Montreal writer and brain surgeon. Although he and his family lived in a *bilingual* city, his children had not learned to speak French as quickly as he had hoped they would. He therefore became interested in the ideas of a McGill University psychology professor, Wallace Lambert. Lambert was raising his children to speak both languages by sending them to French schools while using only English with them himself. He believed that being taught in the language you did not speak at home was the best way to become bilingual.

In going to a school for French-speaking students, however, Wallace Lambert's children had an advantage over most other English-speaking children: they had already spoken some French at home when they were younger and still used it with their French-speaking mother. Imagine how you would feel if you were plunged into a class where everybody else spoke French, while you could not understand a word of the language. You would almost certainly begin to pick it up after

a while. But in the meantime, you would find it hard to make friends and would probably fall far behind in your work. What was needed, Lambert, Penfield, and a group of other dedicated parents concluded, was a special program for English-speaking children. In such a program, students and teacher would speak only French to each other, but all pupils would start out in the same English-speaking boat. Thus one could learn a second language much as one had learned one's mother tongue: first by simply learning to communicate with others, and then by using one's new language skills to find out about a variety of different subjects.

In 1965, the first French immersion program in an English-speaking public school was set up in a suburb of Montreal. Within a few years, French immersion began to spread to other parts of Quebec and to other provinces across Canada. But at first, as you will see in the next chapter, it was not always welcomed with open arms.

The First Reactions

French Immersion: What For?

The Canadian Express, Monday, May 5, 1969

Are French Immersion Students losing their English?

Immersion Children Learning French. But Can They Add and Subtract?

WHO'S GOING TO PAY?

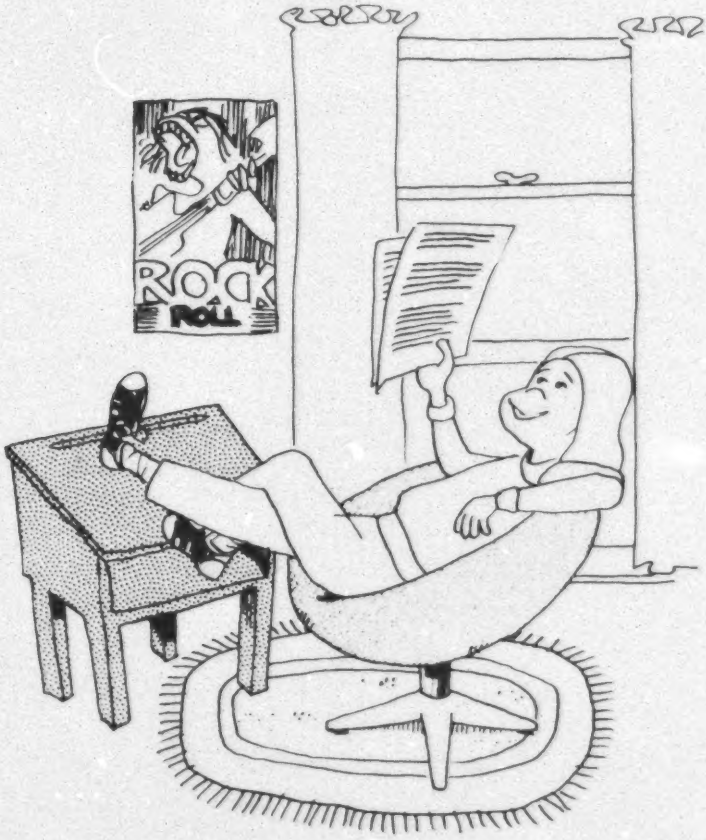
Prominent Educator Claims Immersion Will Produce Mental Confusion.

Can Immersion Students Speak French?

Not all English-speaking Canadians shared the early enthusiasm for French immersion. There were many parents who questioned the need for it, educators who said it would never work, and politicians who wondered who was going to pay for it all. Out of the general hue and cry came a number of serious questions which had to be answered in order to decide whether French immersion was worthwhile, and if so, what shape it should take. These questions formed the basis of the most thorough *evaluation* of a French program ever carried out in this country. If you were in one of the classes that was evaluated during the 1970s, you will already know that many French immersion students were tested and tested — and retested! — over that ten-year period. Even if you were not in one of these classes, you still have played an important role, as one of the pioneers of French immersion in Canada, in what has proven to be a highly successful experiment.

EVALUATION

From the French **évaluer**: to find the value or worth of.



The Experiment

The questions asked

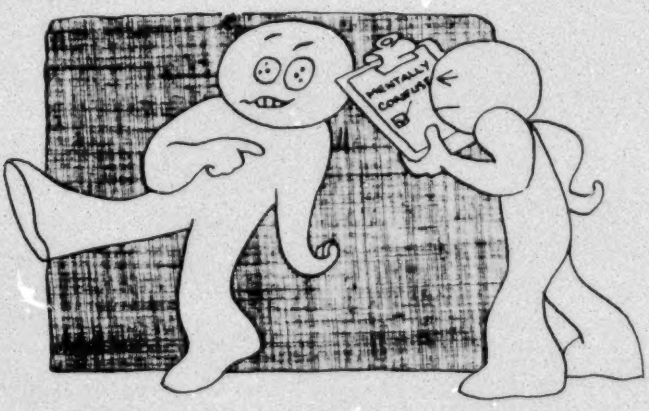
Here are the four major questions the people who set out to evaluate French immersion were trying to answer:

1. Would being in a French immersion program have any bad effect on your progress in English?

2. How much French would you actually learn in an immersion program? Would you learn more than students taking a regular French course, for twenty to forty-five minutes a day, and studying all their other subjects in English?

3. Would you do as well as students in a regular, all-English program in your other subjects (history, geography, mathematics, science, and so on) if you studied these in French?

4. Would the need to think in two languages cause you "mental confusion"?



WHAT KIND OF RESULTS DO YOU THINK THE EVALUATION PRODUCED? TAKE A SHEET OF PAPER AND, ON THE BASIS OF YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE, JOT DOWN YOUR ANSWER TO EACH QUESTION SO THAT YOU CAN COMPARE YOUR RESPONSES WITH THE EVALUATORS' FINDINGS (DESCRIBED IN THE NEXT CHAPTER).

The types of immersion program studied

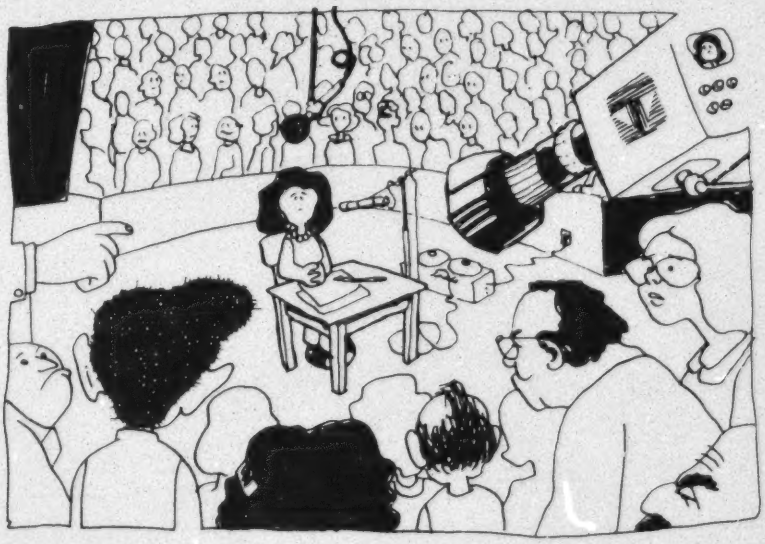
The evaluators also had to relate each of the above questions to the kind of immersion program being taken. There are a number of individual differences between French immersion programs in various elementary or junior high schools across the country. Generally speaking, however, these programs can be divided into three basic types: "early," "partial," and "late immersion."

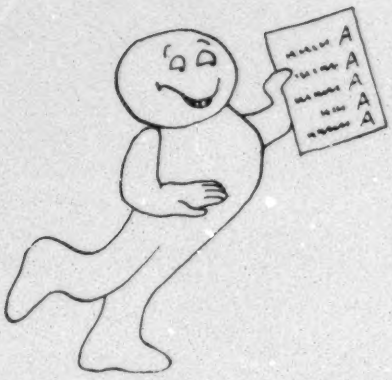
- Students in early immersion are taught entirely in French as soon as they enter kindergarten. English is introduced in grade 2, 3, or sometimes 4. It is then gradually increased until, at the grade 6 to 8 level, approximately half the school day is in French and half in English.
- Students in partial immersion spend 50 percent of their time studying in French, starting in kindergarten or grade 1 and continuing through to grade 8.
- Students in late immersion take at least 50 percent of their subjects in French for a year or two beginning anywhere from grade 6 to 8. These students should have had at least one year of regular French instruction before entering the program.

WHICH TYPE OF IMMERSION PROGRAM HAVE YOU BEEN IN? WRITE "EARLY," "PARTIAL," OR "LATE IMMERSION" BESIDE YOUR RESPONSES TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS SO THAT YOU CAN COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS WITH THE APPROPRIATE FINDINGS.

How the experiment was carried out

The students in the classes chosen for evaluation were observed and tested throughout their entire immersion education. Their progress was compared with that of English-speaking and, where appropriate, French-speaking students of the same age, intelligence, and general background who were being taught in their first language in a regular program.





The Results

While you are looking at the results of the French immersion studies and comparing them with your own views and your own type of program, it is important to keep in mind why you went into immersion in the first place. People study another language for a variety of reasons. For example, they may plan to live and work in an area where the language is spoken, and therefore need to become really fluent in it; or, they may simply wish to be able to "get by" in the language (for reading, travelling, and so on), and therefore only require a basic knowledge.

Thus an immersion program which is not suitable for one person may be just right for somebody else. Even within one type of program, individual students are likely to have different goals and derive different benefits from the experience.

Your English

"To me, my English is being improved by French because some French words will help you out in an English test."

Mark Morin, grade 6 immersion, Saskatchewan

If you feel that being in French immersion has not had any bad effect on your progress in English, your conclusion is the same as that of the evaluators:

The results of the evaluation studies show that for the first few years of elementary school, early immersion students do not read and write quite as well in English as students in a regular, all-English program. However, by the end of grade 4 — after a year or two of formal English instruction — they are on an equal footing. Some early immer-

sion students then go on to do even better than the English-only comparison group by the end of grade 5 or 6. These students are probably able to apply skills they have developed while learning French to the study of their own language.

Despite the fact that they do 50 percent of their classroom work in English, it also takes partial immersion students a couple of years to catch up with students in a regular program. They then continue to do just as well in English, although they do not usually go on, as some of the early immersion students do, to outperform the English-only group.

The English abilities of late immersion students — who have been taught entirely in English up to at least grade 6 — tend to be much the same as those of other English-speaking students their age.

Your French

"I think my French is good enough to use with French-speaking people in not too, too complicated a conversation, to follow a French television show or movie, and to understand most French books."

Peter Foley, grade 7 immersion, Prince Edward Island

"I feel that my child's fluency in French is very high. We have neighbours who moved from Paris recently and she can converse with them easily in French and they are very excited about the quality of French she uses."

Shirley Urquhart, parent of grade 4 immersion student,
Nova Scotia

If you feel you have learned more French in immersion than students in a regular program, your conclusion again reflects that of the evaluators:

The results of the evaluation studies indicate that students who have had early immersion up to the end of grade 6 are not only ahead of students in regular French classes, but can generally understand spoken and written French as well as an average class of French-speaking students in Montreal! Their speaking and writing skills are not quite as good as those of the Montreal French students (regular

contact with French-speaking children appears to be necessary to reach that level of fluency). However, they have no difficulty putting across what they want to say.

"You learn two languages and you can talk to your friends in French."

Jennifer Biebrich, grade 2 immersion, Manitoba

Even at the grade 2 level, early immersion students can communicate quite easily and naturally with French-speaking children their age. In one of the research studies, the evaluators recorded a playtime conversation between two grade 2 pupils. One of the pupils, Irene, came from a French immersion class, the other, Françoise, from a French-speaking school and home. In the following passage, written out exactly as it sounds on the tape, Irene asks Françoise about her age. The two children discuss the subject for a while to decide whether Françoise has already passed her eighth birthday. They play around with what exactly was said, and then the conversation turns into nonsense as Irene retorts: "You said you were a thousand years old."

Irene: *Quand est ta fête?*
Françoise: *Vingt-sept avril.*
Irene: *Ça n. . .ça va venir très près.*
Françoise: *Oui!*
Irene: *Combien tu as . . .? Combien de ans tu as? Quel âge as-tu?*
Françoise: *Huit ans.*
Irene: *Quand est-ce que tu vas avoir neuf ans?*
Françoise: *Je vais avoir neuf ans l'année . . . pas cette année mais l'année qui, qui arrivera après, parce que j'ai sept ans. (giggles)*
Irene: *(giggles) Tu dis que tu es huit ans. (laughs)*
Françoise: *Oui. Parce que mon anniversaire a déjà passé.*
Irene: *Tu dis que tu es neuf ans.*
Françoise: *Non, j'ai dit que j'ai huit ans.*
Irene: *Tu dis que je, que tu es mille ans.*

Did you notice that although Irene corrects herself when she asks Françoise her age, she quite happily goes on to use *tu* es instead of *tu* as *huit, neuf* or *mille ans*? Despite this and other mistakes, Irene has no problem putting her message across, and the conversation carries on in a natural way, just as though French were the mother tongue of both children.

Partial immersion students are also well ahead of students in a regular French course. Although they have only half their schooling in French, they show an ability in the language just a year or two behind that of early immersion students at the same grade level.

Late immersion students may progress as far in reading and writing French as early or partial immersion students, and their overall grasp of the language is much greater than that of students in a regular program.

Follow-up studies have shown that where late immersion and regular French students are mixed together in the same high school French classes, the gap between the two groups sometimes narrows or even disappears. It may be that the presence of the immersion students helps improve the regular students' French. On the other hand, it is possible that immersion students may tend to coast through these later high school French courses while regular French students continue to work at learning the language.

Your other subjects

"I don't believe that immersion has any effect on subjects taken in French, except for a mildly adverse effect on your spelling in English (some words are similar in English and French and occasionally you spell a word the French way instead of the English way). I might add, however, that this problem is very easily overcome."

Rachel Baker, grade 9 immersion, Alberta

If you feel that in French immersion you have done as well in history, geography, mathematics, and science as students in a regular program — where these subjects are taught entirely in English — your conclusion is generally the same as that of the evaluators:

The results of the evaluation studies indicate that early immersion

students are able to keep up with the English-only comparison group in all their school subjects. What is more, they seem able to transfer their knowledge from one language to the other — doing equally well in mathematics, for example, whether tested in English or French.

Although in the early grades partial immersion students do as well in their other subjects as students in a regular program, two of the studies show a somewhat lower performance on mathematics and science tests at the grade 3 to 6 level. It has been suggested that partial immersion students who experience such difficulties may not have mastered enough French to handle the more complex ideas being presented at this stage. However, it appears likely that, as in the case of the late immersion students described below, they will soon recover from their temporary setback and go on to do just as well in high school math and science as students who have been taught entirely in English.

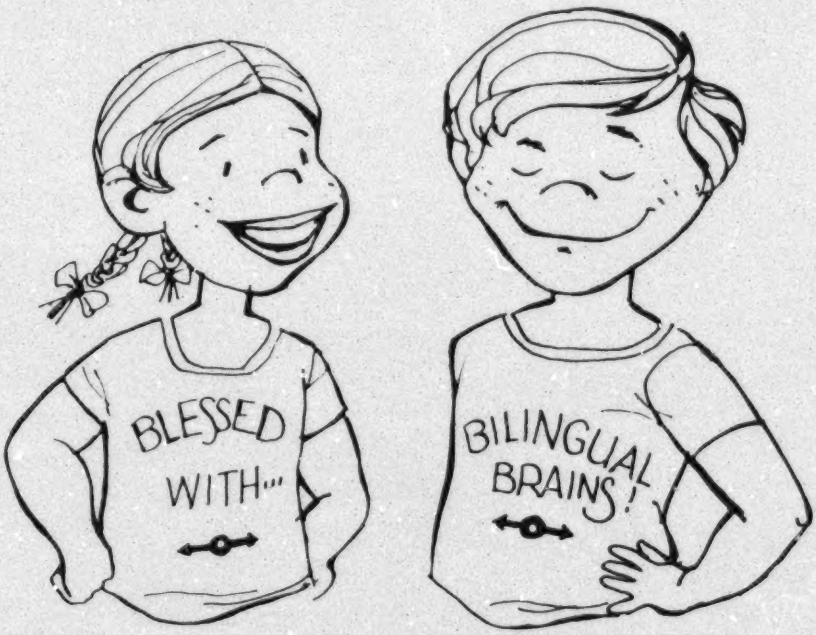
Late immersion students who have only had a year or two of regular French instruction before entering the program also experience occasional setbacks in subjects taught in French. With a little effort, however, these students soon catch up with the comparison group.

Your head!

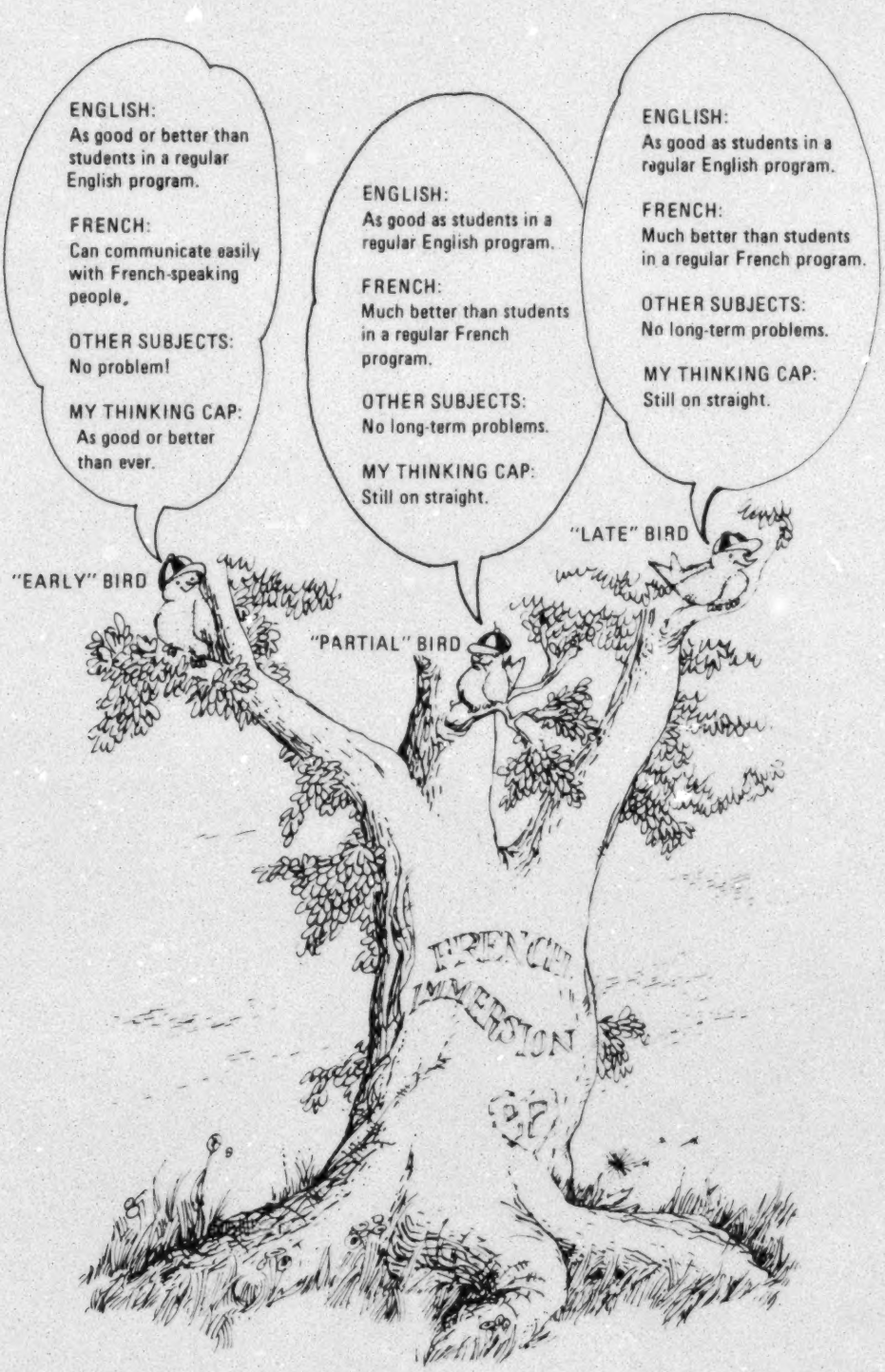
> *"I don't think that studying in French has caused any mental confusion. Sometimes I get mixed up when I'm talking and my friends say it's because of my French, but I don't think it is. I just talk fast anyway!"*
>
> Pam Ayer, grade 9 immersion, New Brunswick

If you believe that the need to think in two languages has not caused you any mental confusion, you will be happy to hear that the evaluators agree with your conclusion! The results of their research show that French immersion (whether early, partial, or late) has no nega-

tive effect on the ability to think. Indeed, there are signs that early immersion may even have a positive effect on intellectual growth, leaving students with more flexibility in thinking as well as a greater sensitivity to language and a better ear for listening. It should be noted here that although the study skills of early immersion students tend to be better than those of students in a regular, all-English program, success in immersion does not appear to be related to intelligence or intellectual ability.



WHAT KIND OF "BIRD" ARE YOU? FIND YOUR BRANCH ON THE FRENCH IMMERSION TREE (PAGE 16) TO MAKE SURE THAT IN MATCHING YOUR CONCLUSIONS WITH THOSE OF THE EVALUATORS YOU PICKED THE CORRECT TYPE OF FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM.


ENGLISH:
As good or better than students in a regular English program.
FRENCH:
Can communicate easily with French-speaking people.
OTHER SUBJECTS:
No problem!
MY THINKING CAP:
As good or better than ever.
"EARLY" BIRD
ENGLISH:
As good as students in a regular English program.
FRENCH:
Much better than students in a regular French program.
OTHER SUBJECTS:
No long-term problems.
MY THINKING CAP:
Still on straight.
"PARTIAL" BIRD
ENGLISH:
As good as students in a regular English program.
FRENCH:
Much better than students in a regular French program.
OTHER SUBJECTS:
No long-term problems.
MY THINKING CAP:
Still on straight.
"LATE" BIRD
FRENCH IMMERSION

It isn't Over Yet

"We're really lucky we've had French immersion. We'll always have more choices, more opportunities because of it. There are so many benefits. We know the two main languages of our own country, and we can visit half the countries of the world and speak the language of the country. It should help us find jobs too, even summer jobs. After all, I can look for work anywhere in Quebec if I want."

Donna Birkett, grade 9 immersion, Ontario

There are many advantages to having learned Canada's other official language. These advantages may diminish, however, unless like Donna Birkett — who was able to go into a follow-up immersion program when she entered high school — you can find a way to keep up your French after graduating from elementary or junior high school. As Carolyn Edwards of Nova Scotia explains, if her daughter (presently in grade 4 immersion) does not continue to work at her French when she reaches high school, "she will surely lose a great percentage of what she has learned." Once muscles have been dev loped, they should go on being exercised or they will lose their strength. Whatever your immersion experience may have been, if you want to maintain or improve your French, you must continue to use it. This means:

- looking at the opportunities available to you;
- deciding which ones are best suited to your needs;

and then

- making an effort to pursue them!

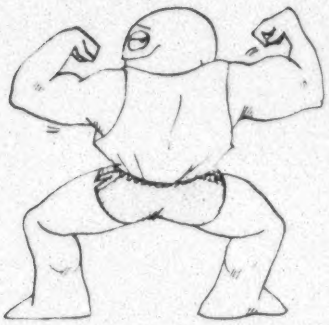
"I was much impressed with the spoken French [of the immersion students] by the end of elementary school . . . . It was disappointing that on reaching high school, their French seemed to peter out, due to the fact that so few options could be offered in French."

"I think it would be extremely beneficial for the high school to have an exchange program with another French high school so the children can test their fluency. Perhaps this would show them their weak areas, and a week or two of total immersion makes a vast improvement in speaking French."

"I would have preferred to send him [my son] to a French high school, at least for a couple of years."

"In all fairness, I think the program did make my child oilingual; it is up to her now to carry on and make the effort to polish up her French."

Parents of Montreal-area high school graduates, 1977



What You Can Do

Take a follow-up French immersion program

"I plan to . . . keep studying French/take social studies and math in French/continue in the immersion program throughout high school and hopefully through college."

Grade 8 immersion students, British Columbia

A follow-up French immersion program is a secondary school program designed to keep up or improve the French that immersion students have learned in elementary or junior high school. Where they exist, the kinds of follow-up programs available vary widely, offering anywhere from one to four options in French. If you want to know more about follow-up programs in your area, or if you want to encourage action to set up or improve such a program, here are some of the questions you should be asking:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- **What are my goals for a follow-up program?**
  What level have you reached? (This will depend on the type of immersion program you have been in and on your own personal experience.) Do you wish to progress beyond this level — how much and for what purpose? Or, do you just want to maintain it?

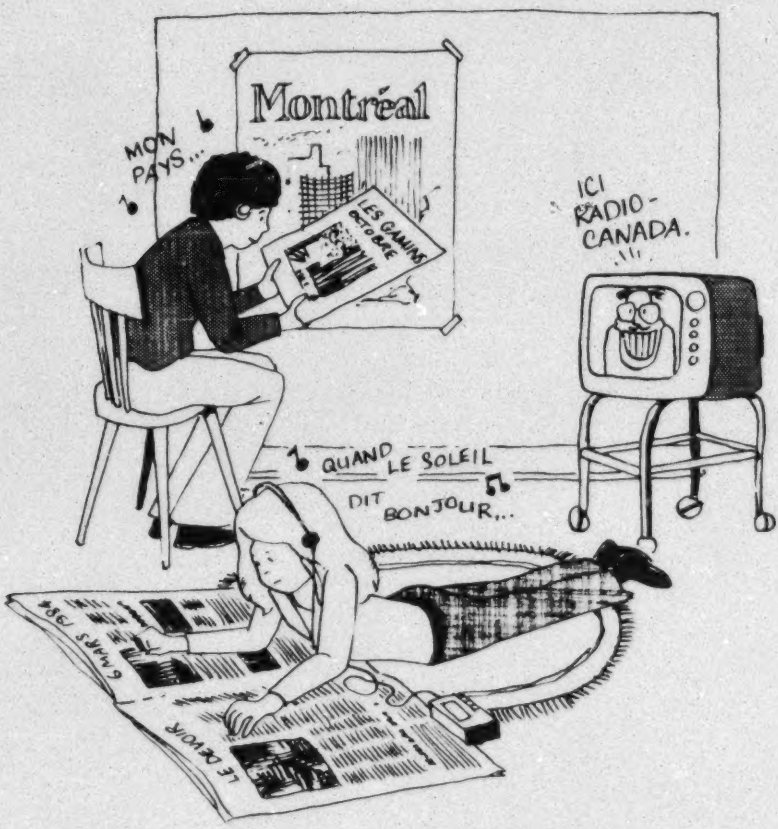
QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL, SCHOOL BOARD, OR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

- **In what grades are follow-up programs available?**
  Ideally, some sort of follow-up program should be offered all the way through high school. (Remember the evaluation results for

those immersion students who weakened or lost their advantage after a year or two in a regular high school French course.)

- **Which subjects are taught in French?**
  Since a regular high school French course is unlikely to meet your needs, your French Language Arts program should be designed to build on the skills you have already acquired. Otherwise, "which subjects are taught in French" is probably not as important as "how many subjects are taught in French".
- **How many subjects are taught in French?**
  Some researchers believe that you must take at least 50 percent of your subjects in French to maintain even your present level of ability. This percentage is certainly essential if you wish to increase your fluency in the language. Indeed, if your goal is to become fully bilingual, or if you plan to work or study in French after high school, you may wish to consider going to a French high school. Given sufficient motivation, you probably have enough French by this time to handle the challenge of studying in a totally French-speaking environment.
- **What are the French-language options at Canadian universities?**
  Many students are unaware of the possibilities that often exist for carrying on their French in university. If you are prepared to travel, virtually any career can be pursued in French. Most provinces have either a French-speaking or a bilingual university, and a few English-speaking universities are now beginning to set up immersion programs where subjects other than French can be studied in the language.

Financial and political concerns may make it difficult for your local school board to respond right away to your requests — and those of your parents, teachers, and friends — for the establishment or further expansion of a follow-up French immersion program. Furthermore, there may not be any French schools in your area to provide you with an alternative. Or, you yourself may decide that this is not the type of secondary school education best suited to your needs. To at least "keep your hand in," you will then want to take the regular French courses offered each year throughout high school, as well as take advantage of some of the other opportunities described in this chapter.

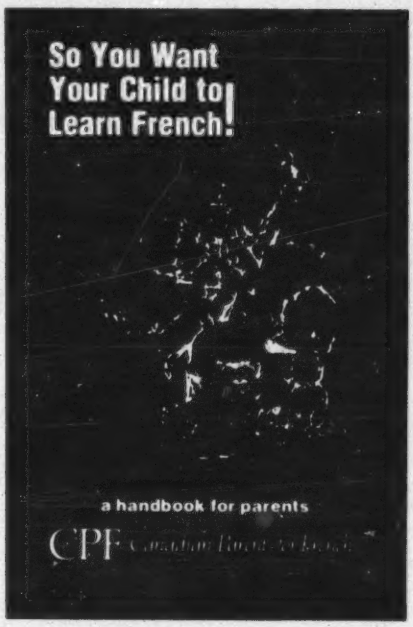


Read French-language books, newspapers, and magazines

"I plan to take some books home and read them to improve my French."
Larysa Roemer, grade 6 immersion, Saskatchewan

Look for French books, newspaper items, and magazine articles that are of interest to you; then use a dictionary to help you over the difficult spots. Ask your school or local librarian to help in selecting the type of book you most enjoy — sports stories, romantic novels, science fiction, or whatever. Such regular features as comic strips, horoscopes, or TV schedules can provide an easy and entertaining introduction to a French newspaper or magazine.

If the library does not have what you are looking for, the librarian may be able to place an order for you, or at least tell you where else to look. If it does not have any French books at all, perhaps your requests will encourage its directors to start building a collection!



Note: In its handbook for parents, *So You Want Your Child to Learn French!*, Canadian Parents for French suggests a few French books and magazines that may be of interest to you. This publication is available from provincial branches of Canadian Parents for French, or from its national office (for address, see page 24).

Use French-language radio and television

"I listen to French radio and watch French TV."
Nancy Brooks, grade 9 immersion, New Brunswick

It is quite likely that you have a local French-language television station. When you use it, try to select programs that are interesting and relatively easy to follow, such as hockey games, news reports, and weather forecasts.

It is quite likely that you also have a local French-language radio station. Use it too. Music is a language anyone can understand, and you may soon find yourself collecting tapes or records of popular French music you enjoy.

Go to French movies and plays

"My French is good enough to be able to watch a French movie as long as the movie isn't too complicated and the actors don't speak too fast."

Joanne Wilkinson, grade 7 immersion, Prince Edward Island

You may live in an area where there are always lots of movies showing in French. If not, keep an eye on the local listings; there will probably be one from time to time. If you enjoy the theatre, also watch for openings of French plays.

Look for bilingual exchanges, summer jobs and other opportunities to travel

"I think my French is good now because I went on an exchange trip to Quebec and lived with a French-speaking family."

John Edstrom, grade 8 immersion, Newfoundland

If you do not live in a bilingual area, you can still take advantage of a bilingual exchange program, in which you and a French-speaking student take turns visiting each other's home. Such exchanges often lead to on-going friendships, and provide the opportunity for writing letters in French as well as for future visits.

The various agencies which arrange exchange programs usually only charge a small fee to help cover the cost of organization or transportation. Other opportunities to travel or vacation in French-speaking areas, offered by boards of education, summer camps, and so on, are generally more expensive. If you can find a summer job in one of these

areas, however, you can probably recover all the costs of your own self-managed French-language program!

Canadian Parents for French prepares lists of possible summer programs in French. These include bilingual exchange visits, study sessions, summer camps, and family holidays in Quebec, other French-speaking parts of Canada, and France. For information, write to:

Canadian Parents for French
P.O. Box 8470 Terminal
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3H6

Talk!

"A couple of weeks ago there was a group of us on a bus talking about a history test when we found we were speaking French. A man on the bus seemed quite amused to hear us switching back and forth between the languages."

Boyd Balogh, grade 9 immersion, Ontario

If you live in a bilingual area, try to establish as much contact as possible with French-speaking people. Talk to storekeepers, neighbors, and friends in French. Take part-time and summer jobs which require a knowledge of the language and involve yourself in athletic activities (swimming lessons, sports programs such as hockey or basketball) that are conducted in both French and English.

Even if your French is quite good, you may find it difficult to form really close relationships with the French-speaking world around you. Your French friends may have a somewhat different accent or use different expressions than you are accustomed to. They may speak your language better than you speak theirs, or

they may want to practise using English just as much as you want to practise using French. Understanding and compromise will then be needed on both sides.

"Sometimes I want to speak French and hard as I try, English escapes from my mouth!"

Alexandra Tsalikis, grade 7 immersion, Ottawa

Lack of opportunity for day-to-day contact with French-speaking people is a problem that faces a large number of immersion students. In many cities, the French-speaking population is small and there is a tendency to communicate with its members in English because they are so fluently bilingual. You may therefore need to make a special effort to use French with the French-speaking people you encounter.

An even greater effort is often required to speak French with other English-speaking people. After a bit of practice, however, you may find yourself talking to your friends, and to members of your family who can speak French, with equal ease in both languages. You may even decide to join or form a French conversation group, or perhaps to organize a film night for your friends. The National Film Board has a number of French films which are suitable for teenagers. A catalogue can be obtained from your school or local library, or from regional National Film Board offices across Canada.

A True Canadian

Before writing this booklet, the authors sent questionnaire copies to a number of immersion students across the country. In reply to the question "What would you like to find out about French immersion?," one of the students asked, "Why are some people still against it?" There is usually more than one viewpoint on any subject, and it is unlikely there will ever come a time when everybody is in favor of French immersion. As positive results such as the ones described in this booklet become more widely known, however, we hope there will be fewer and fewer people "still against it," and more people like Suzanne Hawkes of the Yukon Territory, who feels that French immersion will give her son "a better understanding of and ability to communicate with French-speaking people, increased ease in learning a third or fourth language, a better over-all education, increased opportunities in later life," and last but not least, the opportunity to be "a true Canadian"!

DO THE RESULTS OF THE IMMERSION "EXPERIMENT" GENERALLY DESCRIBE YOU? HAVE YOU FOUND ANY OTHER GOOD METHODS FOR KEEPING UP YOUR FRENCH? LET US KNOW YOUR EXPERIENCES. WRITE TO THE AUTHORS OF *THE TRIAL BALLOON THAT FLEW*, c/o **THE MODERN LANGUAGE CENTRE, THE ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION, 252 BLOOR STREET WEST, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 1V6**